DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 050 IR 008 521

TITLE	National Education Practices File Development Project. Implementation and Management Plan for Expansion of the National Education Practices File. Product 2.4.
INSTITUTION	Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc., Scotia, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jan 80
CONTRACT	400-77-0095
NOTE	91p.: For related documents, see IR 007 947 and IR 008 521-523.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Data Bases: Education: *Educational Practices: Information Dissemination: *Information Needs: Information Retrieval: *Online Systems; *Planning: *Program Development: Resource Materials

ABSTRACT

This report presents a detailed plan for expanding the National Education Practices File, a program designed to identify information needs in education and develop a resource system for educators. This Phase 2 task focuses on the transition from a small pilot plant project to a full scale integrated resource of the organizational structure that will administer it on a permanent basis and involves the further expansion and refinement of the file itself. Following a discussion of contextual variables impacting on the file, a broad brush overview of implementation alternatives is presented, together with a detailed discussion of issues related to each. Finally, issues requiring further analysis are presented and discussed with particular attention as to how they might be addressed in post-Phase 2 activities. Five objectives are recommended for the Phase 2 transition: (1) maintain Practices File clearinghouse: (2) continue the development and expansion of the file: (3) expand the field test: (4) continue and expand the evaluation: and (5) provide the transition to an operation phase. Appendices present correspondence, team membership information, and suggested Project Advisory Group membership. The bibliography list five references. (Author/RAA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED190050

BRS *Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.*

Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302
(518) 374-5011

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

NATIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICES FILE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICES FILE

PRODUCT 2.4

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Gregory Benson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

January, 1980

IR008321

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
PREFACE	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	vi
IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION PRACTICES FILE - 2.4	
THE CONTEXT OF AN OPERATIONAL PRACTICES FILE	1
Organizing for Transition	5
The Transition Phase	6
Establishing Relationships	11
Acquisitions	15
Documentation	17
Processing	20
Distribution	23
ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR TRANSITION PERIOD	27
Plan for Evaluating the Field Test and Transition	33
PHASE III EVALUATION PLAN SUMMARY	37
Staging and Phasing of the Implementation Plan	39
PHASE III PROJECTED TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES	40
PHASE III DELIVERABLES	42
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	44
References	51
APPENDICES	
A. Letters From Program/Project Representatives Expressing Interest In The Implementation Of The File And The Implications That Implementation Might Have For Their Respective Programs	
B. Role Descriptions Of File Transition Team Members	
C. Suggested Project Advisory Group Membership	

Preface

The National Education Practices File Development Project is part of an Education File Development Program sponsored by the Program on Dissemination and Improvement of Practice of the National Institute of Education. The File Development Program is designed to identify information needs in education and develop reference files to improve educator access to the needed information. One major outcome of the Program was the identification of a need for educational program and practice information targeted to practitioners.

In October, 1977, Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc., (BRS) was awarded a contract to develop design specifications for a National Education Practices File. The design period (Phase I) focused on the collection and documentation of ideas and suggestions from the field regarding various file features including content, acquisitions, selection, source availability, user products and services and the organization for operating the File. A review of related information products was undertaken to identify what similar files and services existed. Based on this study, and the advice of a Project Advisory Committee, comprised of dissemination specialists and educators at all levels, BRS provided NIE with a set of alternatives for further design work and possible development. A feasibility analysis of these options resulted in the recommendation of a file design for testing. This design was completed and submitted to NIE in June, 1978.

In July of that year, BRS was awarded a second contract to develop and test a Practices File based on the approved design specifications. The test file contained approximately two thousand records of programs and practices from the National Diffusion Network, state ESEA, Title IV-C programs, the San Mateo

Educational Resources Center, and numerous other sources. The File was pilot-tested for six months (mid-May through mid-November, 1979) in fourteen sites throughout the Country, including state education agencies (Alaska, Illinois and Texas), regional exchanges (NWREL and SEDL), intermediate service agencies (Wayne County, Michigan; San Mateo County, California), teacher centers (Mid-Coast - Camden, Maine; The Exchange - Minneapolis), an ERIC Clearinghouse (Math, Science and Environmental - Ohio State), an information broker (Educational Resources Library, National Institute of Education), a library network (University of Missouri), and large, urban school districts (Atlanta and Washington, D.C.). The Phase II activities are scheduled to conclude in February, 1980.

Three major documents were produced as a result of Phase I activities:

- Preliminary Design Feature Alternatives and Discussion of Their Feasibility for a National Educational Practices File (March, 1978) presented a delineation and an analysis of three major design alternatives for the File.
- Education Practices File Design (June, 1978) presented detailed specifications for the development and operation of the design alternative selected by NIE.
- Revised Phase II Plan for the National Education Practices File Development Project (June, 1978) contained a plan for pilot testing and evaluating the File and a plan for operating a Practices File clearinghouse operation.

Major reports prepared during Phase II of the File Development Project include:

- Procedures Documentation (January, 1980) contains comprehensive documentation of the specifications and operations of procedures for maintaining and updating the File.

- Pilot Test Operation and Evaluation (January, 1980) contains a detailed description of the development and operation of the network of pilot test sites over the six-month test period. Evaluation of the site operations and of clients' initial assessments of the File are also presented.
- Implementation and Management Plan for Future Expansion of the National Education Practices File (January, 1980) contains a detailed plan for managing the File in an operation mode. The plan is based on results of the pilot test and specifies objectives, functions and organizational and operational structures for the management of the File.

The outcomes of these activities and products will assist the National Institute of Education in developing and maintaining a resource system targeted to the information needs of practitioners and to supporting educational practice improvement efforts.

Acknowledgements

Undertaking so complex a project inevitably requires the cooperation and collaboration of many individuals, groups and organizations. Each of our accomplishments is supported by many people throughout the Country and we extend our sincere thanks to all.

We owe special thanks to the pilot site managers and staff. We know that we received much more than we gave in advice and support. Without their extra efforts undertaken in using and critiquing the File, it would not be possible to provide any reasonable plan for further development and expansion.

We are also grateful for the guidance provided by our Project Advisory Council members: Edward Ball, Harper and Row Publishers; Rodney Barth, Illinois Office of Education; Ted Brandhorst, ERIC Facility; Donald Ely, ERIC Clearinghouse for Information Resources; George French, Philadelphia School System; Thomas Hartsig, Macomb Intermediate School District; Kenneth Komoski, Educational Products Information Exchange; Diane Lassman, The Exchange Teacher Center; Diane MacIntyre, Far West Laboratory; Joel Magisos, National Center for Research in Vocational Education; Harry Osgood, Area Cooperative Educational Service Center; and Frank Thompson, ECOS Training Institute.

We acknowledge with special thanks the support and advice of NIE staff, particularly our project monitors, Mollie McAdams and Jacques Nacson. The Internal Advisory Group members provided timely guidance and advice. For their help we thank Robert Chesley, John Coulson, Jerry Fletcher, Sue Klein, Charles Missar, Jon Schaffarzick, and Lou Walker. Also within NIE, we recognize the leadership provided to this effort by Charles Hoover and Michael Kane.

Finally, we recognize the consultants who have assisted us in various stages of the design and pilot test work. Carolyn Trohoski and Richard Brickley provided essential research and design support; Ronald Sczcypkowski and Ann Pollinger conducted the pilot test evaluation activities; and Richard Lavin and Jean Sanders managed the pilot operation. Their splendid work was invaluable, as was their team spirit. Charles Mojkowski provided extensive and invaluable conceptual and operational support to the Project, and Barbara Christie assisted with the development of the printed products.

Within BRS, several staff are worthy of commendation. Robert Hamilton headed the technical team responsible for the computer processing; Jeff Westcott developed and maintained the online user data-collection system; Edward Hancock, Barbara Derrick and Marian Hasslacher managed the clearinghouse operation, and Lillian Greco coordinated the completion of all project reports.

To all those cited above, we extend our warm regards for your contributions.

Gregory Benson, Jr.
Project Director

Ronald Quake
President
BRS, Inc.

Introduction

The Pilot Test Operation and Evaluation Report (Product 2.7) deals with the operations of the Practices File during the pilot test period and the recommendations resulting from an assessment of that use. This report builds upon that material in delineating a plan for implementing an expanded field test of the File and its transition to an operational component of the nationwide dissemination system. The focus here is on the organizational delivery system as distinct from the file features, although the close relationship between the two requires that references will be made to previous material throughout this report.

The purpose of this plan is to delineate a process for moving the File from a small-scale developmental effort to a full-scale integrated resource. This phase is regarded as a transition, because it includes the gradual transfer of the File to the organizational structures that will administer it on a permanent basis as well as including a further expansion and refinement of the File itself.

Three objectives have guided the File Development Project since its initiation in 1977:

1. Design, develop and test a Practices File that can most efficiently provide needed information in direct support of local education practice improvement efforts.
2. Develop and explore working relationships with those agencies that ultimately will be critical in the institutionalization of the Practices File on a national scale.
3. Facilitate the transfer of responsibility for administration and operation of the Practices File to those organizations that will be responsible for maintaining the File.

With completion of Phase II, the first objective is accomplished, recognizing that additional refinement will be undertaken during further field test operations. This plan is directed largely to objectives two and three. In addressing these objectives, various alternatives for expanding and operating the File are proposed and assessed. These alternatives deal with technical and organizational issues and specifications.

It is axiomatic in problem-solving situations that the definition of a problem determines in large part the solutions that are identified. Mann (1975) tells us that, "correctly stating a problem does not always lead to a right answer, but incorrectly stating a problem practically guarantees a wrong answer (p. 7)." How one defines a problem, however, is conditioned by the value systems and experiences of the potential decision-makers and solution providers. Schon (1971), for example, argues that where reality is ambiguous and indeterminate, and where uncertainty about the future is high, these value systems and experiences shape differing perspectives which result in varying analytical frameworks being advised. These frameworks determine what problems are important to address and data is converted to recommendations within these frameworks.

Our choices, then, are constrained by our vision. To some extent, this is beneficial, for a comprehensive examination of choices requires the generation of all alternatives, assessment of the probabilities of all consequences of each, and evaluation of these consequences against standards. Because, as Simon tells us, these requirements require "powers of prescience and capacities for computation resembling those we usually attribute to God," we are limited in the number of choices we can address.

Based on our work in dissemination over the last several years, we believe the basic choices are organizational and political and that the major task is to

develop and maintain information resource systems as part of a nationwide dissemination capacity. While the federal role in that development is constrained by limited resources and "distance" from the field, we believe that there is a role for the federal education establishment. We are anxious that NIE take a leadership role in the development of resource files, based on its mission, experience and, in particular, on the findings of this project.

We are aware that, just where the issues are thorniest (e.g., organization), the necessary data are most inadequate. The focus of evaluation activities in Phase II was primarily on technical issues, resulting from a limited evaluation budget, a relatively short test period, and a very small file (in both scope and quantity). Moreover, many of the issues are not susceptible to resolution through an analysis of data. This situation impedes the development of rationalistic approaches to analyzing options regarding organizational management and technical issues.

There are many types of rationalities (e.g., political, economic, scientific); all apply in varying degrees. The important focus in this plan (and at this stage in the development of the File) is to identify and analyze the various contexts in which the File will operate and to employ appropriate rational approaches for those contexts. The Practices File is more than a computerized collection of program and practice descriptions; it is potentially both a major component in the nationwide dissemination system (as is ERIC) and a mechanism for interorganizational collaboration and development. Given this latter role, past experiences will be of little help. Even though most of our future decisions are bounded by previously established procedures, we will be required to broaden our conceptualizations of resource systems.

The essential question is: How can we proceed given these limitations in our knowledge base? What we have learned empirically is modest given what we need to know, but we would be remiss if we did not move beyond these limitations in our discussion of potentialities, both organizational and programmatic. This obligation to move beyond the limited empirical base is matched by a related obligation to recognize where recommendations and analysis are based on reasoned judgment and not data.

A small number of important assumptions support our analysis and recommendations with respect to the implementation plan:

- The transition from a developmental project to an operational program should be effected incrementally to allow for collection of additional field test information.
- The Practices File needs ultimately to be integrated with ERIC wherever possible in order to build on this existing capability and thereby hold costs down.
- Given the organizational uncertainties, the determination of "the best way" cannot be determined a priori, thus the need for an organizational framework in which stakeholders participate in decision-making.
- The Practices File needs to be integrated with existing and emerging dissemination activities, particularly those at the federal, national and state levels if it is to provide a support service to those programs.
- The Practices File is not, nor will it be, a static entity; it will change to reflect the needs of practitioners and program managers. For this reason, it is not possible to build in all parts of the system solution a priori.

This report is organized to focus on the major operational issues relating to the field test of the File and to the transition from a project to program status. Following a discussion of contextual variables impacting on the File, a broad brush-stroke overview of the implementation alternatives is presented, together with a detailed discussion of issues related to each. Finally, issues requiring further analysis are presented and discussed, with particular attention to how they might be addressed in post-Phase II activities.

The emphasis is on the organizational and operational elements of the transition phase, including an expanded field test of the File. While file features are addressed in discussing these elements, the reader should review the procedures documentation, (Product 2.1), for a complete discussion of operational and technical issues related to pilot test operations.

THE CONTEXT OF AN OPERATIONAL PRACTICES FILE

The Practices File does not exist in a vacuum nor are the key issues solely technical. A principal motivation for the development of the File is the recognition that a new resource system was required to respond to practitioner needs within a school improvement context. Such a context creates different requirements than exist for ERIC and other archival, document-based systems. For this reason, it is important to further elaborate and examine several dimensions of that context and others prior to defining organizational and service alternatives for the File.

We are told by system designers that everything is related to everything else. Because this is so, it is necessary to define what "everything else" is. The domain of contexts is best illustrated by addressing basic questions about present and future developments and by identifying key issues which impinge on the File while not being related directly to the development effort itself.

It is important to recognize that, while the File will serve many interests of both knowledge (program) producers and clients, it is being developed in the absence of a comprehensive federal or nationwide plan or framework for dissemination. There is no general consensus on goals and objectives, functions, and roles and responsibilities. Indeed, although the original RFP speaks to the need to address federal information policy, it is clear that this policy is so vague as to be non-existent. While it is conceivable that the emerging Department of Education will address this inadequacy, short-term solutions do not appear likely.

Lacking such an overall framework, the standards or criteria for assessing the implementation plan are not completely available outside of the plan, although these standards are implied in this discussion of contexts and in the detailed analysis presented below. Also implicit is a paradigm or framework which we

see as relevant to the policy decisions needing to be made. This paradigm is composed of key assumptions (see above), basic concepts and propositions about the way the File will operate. Unless these concepts are addressed adequately, no amount of technical sophistication and accomplishment will serve as compensation. We recognize and appreciate the power of previously established patterns of behavior, particularly with existing information systems. Our judgment is that some of these patterns--perhaps the most critical ones--do not apply to the Practices File and that whole new or at least different paradigms need to be used. Evolving theories of dissemination are moving from normative conceptions of information seeking and utilization behavior to empirically based descriptions and typologies (see, for example, the work of Hall, 1978, and Fullan and Pomfret, 1978).

The School improvement process serves as a principal context for the future development of the File. It is as much a perspective on the change process as it is a substantive problem-solving approach to addressing meaningful needs. The perspective is important because of the mind set about where the impact of information resources ultimately is realized. At present the concept is little more than an abstraction, but it is likely that its evolution will have a substantial impact on requirements for resource systems at all levels. Major program development, staff development and dissemination programs at all levels are using the school improvement process as a central focus of their efforts. The result is that information resource systems are needed to support activities at the school level. The Practices File is a response to that need and one that the pilot test has demonstrated to be viable and readily integrated.

One central contextual issue relates to the question of what organizational context and pressures will influence decisions about the future development of the Practices File. While it is likely that near-term decisions will be made by NIE, it is probable that a larger and more varied configuration of organizations and actors will participate in future decisions. This is so not only because of the emerging Department of Education but because of the control which stakeholders other than the technicians will wish and demand to have. This view is consistent with our experiences with federal program directors (and their contractors) during the pilot test period as well as with our relationships with the many other organizations involved in file development. This experience has led to the identification of criteria which move beyond the question of technical and organizational integration with existing systems, to address the question of integration with the organizational and technical requirements of a different and larger community of decision-makers and consumers/practitioners.

It is important to recognize that the Practices File is part of a different context than such systems as NTIS, MEDLARS, ERIC, and others. The latter are part of a system which values archival storage, centralized decisions and source documentation. The former, because of its scope and intended audience, is not part of that value system. Key characteristics of the system are its decentralization, its reliance on word-of-mouth disseminaton and the rapidly changing nature of the resource base. Another key characteristic of Practices File development efforts is that there are stakeholders--individuals at federal, state and local levels--who contribute to the File and want to have a say as to how it is developed and maintained. This particular feature presents an unprecedented opportunity for NIE to use the File to facilitate the cross-program sharing which has been recommended by national dissemination studies and forums for several years.

An important contextual variable impacting on the File is the large number of quasi-independent file development efforts at federal, national, regional, state, sub-state and local levels. Recent experience reveals that little control is exercised over most of these efforts. Some of these independent efforts likely will continue because of needs which the Practices File cannot address. Over time, however, it is expected that a substantial number of these files will merge with the Practices File.

What this discussion of context attempts to demonstrate is that decisions about the future development and insitutionalization of the Practices File cannot be made in isolation of a larger, more complex set of conditions if the File is to become an integral part of the school improvement effort(s). Given the high degree of ambiguity and uncertainty about the future and given the scope and quantity of contextual variables, it is necessary to develop an implementation plan which encompasses more than technical issues such as source documentaiton and processing, or simplistic organizational issues such as integration with existing systems. We are sure that the future development of the File will not be governed solely by addressing such concerns. Recognizing that developments will not always be the result of strategic choices, we nevertheless believe that NIE can exercise considerably more control over the File's future by identifying and anticipating significant needs and possible solutions.

Organizing for Transition

The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed plan for the organization and operation of an expanded File. Based on experiences and outcomes of Phase II, this implementation is broken into two phases--a transition period and a full-scale operational period. As was discussed previously, there are several issues and problems related to the implementation of the File. Moreover, the plan presented, in recognition of the context in which the File will operate, is of a broader scope than originally envisioned in the RFP. For these reasons, the implementation plan is organized around four major functions of the File: establishing relationships, acquisitions, processing and distribution. A separate section delas with the organizational structure proposed for addressing these functions.

Issues and problems identified during the pilot test period are discussed as they apply to specific functions or activities, with particular attention given to how the proposed plan accommodates these issues. Where appropriate, brief scenarios or illustrations are used to depict how the particular activity would be carried out. As we indicated above, a comprehensive and detailed analysis of alternatives was not undertaken because it is impossible to exhaust the limits of such an exercise. The result would be the development of "strawmen" that are too easily dismissed. Secondly, it is important to see the systemic nature of the plan we propose. Everything does relate to everything else, and the selection of key organization alternatives determines or limits options available at later stages of planning.

One policy choice that precedes any further development of implementation plans is whether NIE should support the continued development, coordination and implementation of the File or instead support the development of regional, state local practice files (assuming they are mutually exclusive). Certainly, there is no formal outcome of the pilot test period that informs that policy decision. It is an important question, however, and its discussion at this point is necessary.

Based on an assessment of developments in the area over the last several years, it appears that the federal level will need to be engaged in both activities as is currently the case. Developing a national file of practices and programs is a natural extension of the development, verification and dissemination activities being undertaken by many federal education programs. The key distinctions between these two development efforts are the types of materials that would become part of the resource bases and the outreach mechanisms that would be employed. Both of these elements are discussed below. As these discussions and the thrust of our entire plan will show, these tow levels of file development can be complementary parts of an integrated nationwide resource base.

The Transition Phase

Based on our experiences during Phase I and II, it is not possible to project whether and how the Practices File would become integrated completely with the existing ERIC system. The six-month transition phase is part of this design in order to provide a time frame for fully exploring what can be fully integrated with ERIC. We feel, however, that this issue is subordinant to other larger issues. Moreover, its resolution will require further experience during the field test period.

As we indicate above, there is a need for a transition period to bridge between the very limited pilot test and full-scale implementation of the File. The support for the transition period is illustrated by the following points:

1. The scope and size of the test version of the File is insufficient to test such variables as site utility, responsiveness to client needs and ultimate utility and impact.
2. The test period covered only three months of the school year and valid and reliable estimates of utility and impact could not be made.
3. While the processing function may be assimilated into the existing ERIC system, this is not the case with the other major functions.
4. A small number of technical issues require additional investigation through an empirical assessment of types of services.
5. There are several recommended features of the Practices File (source documentation, acquisition relationships, updating, information fields and marketing) which are either wholly or partial derivations from current archival systems.

Each of these points is discussed in the delineation of the implementation plan for the field test and transition phase.

Before moving to a detailed specification of the technical and organizational elements of the implementation plan, we sketch an outline of the major features or recommendations of the proposed plan in order to provide a framework on which to place the details provided. As we indicated previously, the framework needs to be viewed wholistically rather than as a collection of separate strategic recommendations. The major recommendations are:

1. While the technical design and maintenance of the data base should be interfaced with the ERIC system under NIE's management, decisions about the programmatic aspects of the File whould be managed independently and shared among appropriate federal and state programs whose interests are directly served by the File.
2. A conscious effort should be employed to use the File and its development and implementation as a catalyst and facilitor for increased coordination among federal programs involved in dissemination.
3. Expand the size and scope of the File as soon as practical. Expand the test through an increase in number of sites. Lenghten the field test period to a minimum of nine months and expand the evaluation to focus on verification of the pilot test findings and on addressing impact questions.
4. Investigate the feasibility of integrating the Practices File with the ERIC system. Where integration is not possible, use a collaborative structure to handle special needs. Document processing should be the first function considered for integration.
5. Employ acquisition and selection criteria based on the principle of widest possible benefit to the practitioner and the cooperating programs. Delay decisions on such issues as quality control, source documentation and update until completion of the field test.
6. Focus File content on existing organized data bases (both federal and non-federal). Use the File to push for increased documentation, not validation.

7. Facilitate development of technically compatible resource bases at other levels (e.g., state or regional). Develop models and provide technical assistance.
8. Develop a collaborative organization for the overall management of the File.
9. Use acquisition mechanisms for dissemination; develop closer ties with information centers and other resources (e.g., Teacher Centers, ISA's) proximate to practitioners.

The following sections provide a detailed discussion of these major recommendations and the rationale and available documentation supporting them. The implementation plan spans an eighteen-month period during which a full field test will be undertaken, together with a concurrent transfer to appropriate administrative and operational responsibilities from BRS to other agencies. At the end of twelve months, a full plan for shared-cost system maintenance will be completed, allowing six months for the actual implementation of this plan and transfer of the Practices File to an institutionalized state. The overall effect of this plan results in the decision, creation, testing, and institutionalization of a National Education Practices File in less than four years, an accomplishment NIE can ultimately point to with pride.

The unique underlying philosophy of this proposal is embodied by the need for direct, active support and maintenance of the Practices File by those agencies which shall most benefit from its continued success. It is our belief that those concerned with organized practice improvement are, and must continue to be, involved in the information system support activities required for their efforts. The distinct advantage of the Practices File is that it provides a "cross-program," coordinated effort that builds upon the individual program efforts already in place or emerging.

The second and perhaps more important concept underlying this proposal is the belief that cooperative efforts focused on the information support efforts embodied by the Practices File shall undoubtedly result in cooperative efforts in other areas of the education improvement effort on the national scale. Efforts of project staff with other agency efforts support this direction. This positive potential impact is incalculable in terms of human and fiscal resource efficiency, to say nothing of the local benefits that might be derived from a National multi-agency/program effort to improve educational practice. The momentum of the Practices File Development Project provides an unprecendented opportunity to facilitate coordination of practice improvement as many have envisioned and recommended but none have accomplished on the national scale.

It is not unique that technological developments lead to quantum advances in the evolution of a field. In electronics, standardization of public use amperage/voltage and the wall plug receptacle led the way to an unprecedented "electronic society." In the field of transportation, standardization of railroad track width was the key initial step toward our mobile society. It is a very real possibility that a coordinated information support system in the area of education practice improvement can provide dramatic advances in the state of the art of education. There is a need, there is a willingness, and there is a momentum. To neglect timely orchestration of these positive conditions could very well retard the evolutionary process in this essential field.

In other fields, significant advances frequently run contrary to popular opinion or self-interest, thus requiring bold, unpopular efforts to achieve success. In this instance, a significant potential can be opened for exploration through mere logical extension of an existing concept and program that has gained the support of a variety of education publics, a fact clearly documented in the evaluation report and later in this proposal. As will be shown, this support is

not simply rhetorical, but consistent with an integrated plan to achieve objectives two and three resulting in a lasting impact on a variety of national, state and regional education programs.

Establishing Relationships

This first major function of the Practices File comprises the most critical activities of the transition period (and of the full-scale operation of the File). This judgment is based on the large number of organizations and agencies engaged in developing programs and practices or in developing files of such materials. Three major activities are included within this function:

1. Establish and maintain relationships with agencies and organizations engaged in developing practice materials.
2. Establish and maintain relationships with agencies and organizations engaged in developing resource files.
3. Develop and implement an awareness campaign targeted to intermediary organizations and agencies engaged in dissemination.

The development of relationships is critical for these reasons:

- File development activities are taking place at all levels (federal, national, regional, state, sub-state and local).
- NIE must decide what role it can play in this growing development effort.
- File development is a costly and complex activity; substantive benefits could be derived from increased cooperation and coordination.
- Decisions about the future development of the File will impact on many other organizations and agencies; they need to be involved in these decisions.

Recommended Strategies.

1. In order to create a recognized administrative body for the transition, NIE should form a "transition team" responsible for the conduct of all other recommendations.

2. In order to establish relationships with other organizations and agencies engaged in developing program resources and/or files, the transition team should form an Advisory Board comprised of representatives of these key entities. The transition team should make them aware of its intent to take leadership responsibility for the technical and organizational development of the File and of its intent to develop a collaborative structure for building and funding that development.

Based on experiences during the pilot test, we believe there is a natural leadership role to play in developing and implementing the File. Because NIE is not linked to any one source of programs and practices, and because it manages the ERIC system, it is consistent for it to play the role of File designer and organizer through creation of the transition team. The collaborative structure for development is needed, however, because the content of the File is controlled by a large number of federal and state programs. The collaborative structure recognizes the legitimacy of these programs and uses their talents and resources to build a file which responds to both program developer and consumer needs. Details regarding the operation of the collaborative mechanism are provided below in the specifications for organizational structure for implementing the File. Recommended steps for establishing relationships include:

1. Communicating with all federal program managers regarding the results of the pilot test.
2. Sponsoring a meeting of these program managers and other disseminators (e.g., persons participating in various dissemination activities at national, regional, state, sub-state and local levels). The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss the implications of the File for participants' programs (several major programs have already been contacted and expressed an interest in this activity).

3. Identify and describe the potential and actual file development activities being undertaken at all levels, particularly federal, national, regional and state.
4. Establish ad hoc mechanisms for collaborating in the transition phase of the Practices File, including the expanded field test.
5. Identify established sources of program and practice information which can be included in the File.
6. Develop awareness materials targeted to intermediaries citing the content, form and potential uses of the File.
7. Make presentations at all dissemination meetings, covering the results of the pilot test and the plan for implementation.

To ascertain the degree of interest in the Practices File, BRS staff communicated with directors or representatives of approximately twenty federal and state programs, asking them whether they would be interested in attending a meeting to discuss the File. As of January 15, several have responded affirmatively. (See Appendix A for responses from such programs as NDN, ESEA, Title IV-C, Vocational Education Dissemination, Teacher Corps Dissemination and others.) This response is a clear indication of the active interest in the File expressed by those whose collaborative efforts can make it a success. This interest is further evidenced through our interactions with information resource providers and file developers at all levels. The File is seen as having great potential as a national mechanism for helping federal programs get their outputs into the hands of practitioners as well as a mechanism and a stimulus for identifying documentation and acquiring the output of program development support by other sources.

Based on this analysis of the interorganizational context, the alternatives to a shared and collaborative design and implementation of the File do not appear

reasonable if the File is to play a major support function to these school improvement programs. To attempt to maintain a centralized control within NIE, particularly at a time when NIE will become a unit within a larger Office of Educational Research and Improvement, would be self-defeating. While the organizational structure of the new Department is not known at this time, it is likely that "School Improvement" functions will include some programs engaged in dissemination. This organizational environment will require closer collaboration and this plan is one way of achieving it.

NIE's maintaining an independent status in this context would result in those programs which provide the practice materials for the File having no policy role in determining the way in which the File was constructed nor in the services it provided or supported. Given the situation at present, where programs are beginning to develop individual data bases, it is hard to see how these program managers would abandon their present efforts to contribute to and support the Practices File without maintaining some of the control they would have if they were to build their own.

Without some effort to reach out and create a collaborative structure, we see no organizational imperatives to reduce the existing and potentially increased fragementation in this area. The technology is available and the costs are supportable. It is unlikely that Department-wide policy could be established to prevent the development of independent, fragmented and potentially duplicative files. Unless NIE takes bold and deliberate steps to create and nurture shared decision-making and collaboration, a significant opportunity will be lost and the problems of practitioner access to the practice knowledge base will become more acute.

Acquisitions

We include within this second major function the process of selection because acquisitions are influenced by the criteria used to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate documents. While acquisition activities build on the relationships established, it extends well beyond the parameters of the interactions with other organizations and agencies. Based on experiences of the pilot test, we see the following as the two major activities to be performed:

1. Establish and use criteria for identifying sources of programs and practices.
2. Establish and use criteria for the selection of programs and practices to be placed in the Practices File.

Several conceptual and technical issues surround the conduct of these activities, requiring that our recommended strategies be supported by a discussion of our points of view on them. As with the need for establishing relationships, there is little hard data from the pilot test to support our recommendations, although our experiences during the test and our discussions with test-site managers, our Advisory Group, and many other disseminators sustain our advice.

The following recommendations are made for the field test and transition period. While we recommend that final decisions regarding some issues (e.g., quality control, source documentation and updating) be postponed until further study can be done during the field test, we propose strategies here supported by our present knowledge and experience base.

Recommended Strategies.

Focus initial acquisition relationships on those programs (federal and non-federal) having organized identifiable resource bases. Continue to investigate how the File may collect unorganized resources. Employ acquisition and selection criteria based on the principle of widest benefit to practitioners and those who directly serve practitioners' support service needs. Avoid stringent quality-control measures until and unless verification of such measures is accomplished.

Based on our experiences during the pilot test and on related experiences in working with other organizations developing resources files, we believe there is a pressing need to attempt a coordination of these resource files for the ultimate benefit of the practitioner. Such major national studies as the Interstate Project on Dissemination and the Dissemination Advisory Group Study preceded but reinforce the need for coordination of the educational resource base. The major empediments to such coordination are not technical but organizational. NIE should have as a top acquisition activity reaching out to these programs with organized data bases. At present our list of these programs includes: Teachers Centers, the National Diffusion Network, ESEA, Title IV-C, Teacher Corps, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Research and Development Exchange, R & D Utilization, Career Education, Bilingual Education, Special Education (NIMIS, Dissemination), Consumer Education, State Capacity Building and the Office of Education Regional Offices. We do not doubt that there are and will be others.

These programs include those engaged in developing and/or disseminating recources. For this reason, they have monies to support File development activities (indeed, many are developing their own), particularly if it can be demonstrated that the File can meet or exceed their requirements while reducing the burdens of designing and implementing their own resource base.

While this acquisition activity should get top priority, we are aware of the need to acquire less well organized practice information. We believe more work needs to be done on this activity during the field test. During the pilot test, BRS project staff discussed with test-site managers and others the criteria for determining what practices should be collected in a national practices file. In light of decisions made about the test file at the end of Phase I (see products 1.4 and 1.5), BRS staff attempted to build upon those decisions through a review of the practical limitations of a national file. Based on these discussions and a further analysis of issues, it appears there may be some practical considerations which limit what can be part of a national file. (see Product 2.1 for additional discussion of this issue).

Documentation

The major difficulty needing to be addressed with respect to limitations is the resource requirements and incentives that will be required to access the programs, products and practices of "grass roots" efforts which do not engage in documentation and formal information system development because of unclear mandates or inadequate incentives. This group of practices comes primarily from the "practice community" and there is a philosophical, if not practical, need to access these outputs for the File.

This recognition of a major impediment to accessing this second group of materials is tied to the need for documentation, a criterion which we believe is more critical to the File and more responsive to practitioner needs than other quality-control measures. A major impediment to utility is the documentation of the practice in such a manner and form that it can be abstracted and made available for follow-up requests. The lack of documentation cannot be compensated completely by the availability of a human contact, although practitioners indicated in the evaluation that, in many cases, the latter is sufficient. It is important to see the File affecting as well as being effected by that condition. We recommend that the File actively attempt to move practice development activities to increased documentation.

Federal Control. Another consideration to be weighed is the perception that, by focusing acquisition efforts on organized resource bases, the federal "agenda" will be served and federal programs will be marketed at the expense of "home-grown" programs and practices. Notwithstanding the considerable organizational and systemic benefits that would be derived from having organized practice and program resource bases accessible through one system, we are not anxious that the File be developed and marketed as a federal dissemination

mechanism. Although it is true that only a few organized resource bases are developed without any federal support, this does not mean that they are federally controlled or serve only federal interests. The resource files being developed by Teacher Center projects and by ESEA, Title IV-C state offices are federally supported but contain the products of locally controlled development efforts. The same holds true for federally funded dissemination programs such as NDN, R&D Exchange and State Capacity Building. In each case, it is not a federal agenda that dictates the content of information provided; it is the needs of the clients served and , therefore, the "home-grown" practices are addressed through cooperation of these programs.

Federal Endorsement. The issue of quality control has been, and will continue to be, a major one. The common criticism is that, unless the practices are screened before being entered in the File, the federal government will be disseminating and endorsing practices of questionable or unknown quality. Experience during the pilot test and analysis of this issue since the start of the project have not identified this as a major issue for either practitioners or information center personnel. We recommend that quality criteria for acquisition and selection be maintained as in the pilot test File with the strengthening of the documentation, as discussed above and recommended by pilot test users. We do not wish to discourage continuing efforts at validation and verification; we do feel that lack of such validation should not keep practices out of the File. As we indicated in previous design documents, any system of screening would be cumbersome and extremely expensive to design and operate. Gains in utility and impact through such efforts will be relatively marginal given the required investment. We see a greater potential in efforts to improve "consumer" skills in assessing products and information. Quality documentation will be required to

support those efforts, much as labelling laws make it easier for users to ascertain the value and potential utility of a medicine or food substance.

Aside from the costs to NIE in operating a screening mechanism based on judgments of quality (i.e., does it work?), we do not view this as a priority need for the File or a priority for NIE. This is so since other major federal programs (e.g., Vocational Education, Special Education, Teacher Corp) are already engaged in such validation efforts and will add to the pool of practices that will become part of the File. It will be possible for searches to retrive only "validated" programs if that is what clients request. Based on previous research and experience, however, clients place less emphasis on validation and on whole programs. They are looking for components or practices within programs and these may not be validated.

A scenario of the operations of acquisition and selection processes may serve to illustrate the consequences of our recommendations in these areas. The sequence of activities follows from the relationships established with those programs engaged in program development and dissemination. While these programs have mandate and sufficient dollars to develop their own resource base, they will buy into a national File if the technical operation of the File is handled by NIE, and if the File addresses their management and program information needs, (this was demonstrated by the pilot test with the Title IV-C and NDN programs).

Each program would assign staff (some already have) to their own acquisiton activities. The transition team would provide orientation sessions for these staff to explain acquisition processes and to provide guidance regarding documentation requirements. Selection for these submissions from programs would be limited only by the need for adequate documentation. All other qualitative judgments

would be made by the program. Since the range of programs which are presently, or shortly will be, engaged in resource development includes those with major programs (e.g., NDN) to those emphasizing practices (e.g., Teacher Centers), the File will provide a variety of responses to any request. In effect, the parameters of the Practices File content will be determined by the outcomes of development activities.

During the field test, the emphasis on adequate documentation will be sufficient to acquire a substantial pool of practices and programs, perhaps as many as seven to eight thousand. Over the long term, NIE should move its emphasis on documentation closer to the grass-roots level where incentives for such sharing are fewer. The Teacher Center's Program may be one vehicle for reaching down into the practitioner community to identify practices which may have widespread applicability but which are not documented sufficiently for dissemination at the present time.

While it is true that a Practices File is just one component of a dissemination system, it is likely to be a powerful influence on the nature of development. By requiring documentation of key program and practice elements (e.g., objectives, procedures, materials, evaluation), the File will move developers to consider the need to explain adequately what they have developed and whether it works. In some respects, this emphasis on quality documentation will serve as a motivation for undertaking better quality-control procedures as well.

Processing

This third major function of the Pracitces File presents the fewest issues and problems. This is so because a major criterion of the File development effort was that compatibility with the ERIC system be maintained as much as possible.

Recognizing the technical quality of the ERIC processing system and its flexibility in accommodating the needs of the Practices File, the processing operations for the File are patterned closely after those for ERIC. While the specific technical recommendations for processing are contained in the procedures documentation (Product 2.1), the focus here is on the operation of those recommendations within the system we are recommending.

Processing objectives include:

1. Establish and use operational criteria for entering acquired program and practice information into ERIC or the Practices File.
2. Process all program and practice information acquired according to procedures specified.

Recommended Strategies.

Assess whether processing activities can be moved into the ERIC clearinghouse system in the transition period. Provide orientation and training to appropriate clearinghouse staff. Enter into Practices File all submissions from organized program files. Where decisions are made at clearinghouse level, the need for updating the form and the availability of source documentation should be the major criteria for judging whether the information should be entered into the Practices File or ERIC.

There are a small number of issues identified during the design and pilot test phases which impinge upon the operations of the processing function during the transition period and beyond. These are discussed here and those relating to the organization of the operations are discussed in a later section.

ERIC or the Practices File? Since the inception of the project, two related concerns have been raised by NIE staff. The first concern is what is a "practice"? The second concern is how will we decide what practices will go into the File and what will go into ERIC? Based on our experiences during the pilot test and on our discussions with practitioners, program managers and information center staff, we believe there are answers to each concern.

Operationally, we propose that the content of the Practices File deal with documentation of classroom, school and district activities in teaching/learning and in management. It is research, theory and craft knowledge documented at the level of classroom implementation. Another operational perspective is to define as a practice whatever is submitted by an organized program resource base. Thus, whatever it submitted by Teacher Center projects would be defined as a practice and entered into the Practices File, provided that adequate documentation for each component were profided and specific evaluative information (or lack of it) is indicated.

With respect to the decision on whether a program or practice should be entered in ERIC or the Practices File, we believe there are several easily applied criteria:

1. The requested placement of the submitting program (e.g., Teacher Centers)
2. The need for updating
3. The lack of source documentation
4. The nature of the activity described (i.e., the degree of direct applicability to teaching/learning and management)

Abstracting Control. Consistant with the recommendation that the organized data bases of existing programs should be incorporated into the Practices File, the abstracting and documentation for these resources will be done by the staff of each program. While this represents a considerable cost savings for the File (see discussion of Costs in Product 2.1), there is some concern by NIE staff that the quality control exercised by the Clearinghouses would be compromised. Our recommendation is that those programs contributing resources to the File have appropriate staff trained by the Phase III contractor and ERIC Clearinghouse staff in abstracting. In addition to the training, editorial control and technical assistance

should be provided by the File Clearinghouse to all program staff to assure a uniformly high quality of abstracting. Final editing, review of indexing, and other record-processing will be accomplished by the centralized File Clearinghouse staff, during the transition period, and potentially by the ERIC Clearinghouse(s) during the operational phase.

Existing Practices Within the ERIC Files. It has been pointed out by NIE that ERIC already contains many records which would fit the definition of practices as defined operationally by the Practices File and that decisions need to be made about removing these from ERIC for placement in the Practices File. The desire to establish a complete and absolute dichotomy between the two files as an unnecessary and unproductive activity. While the operational criteria suggested above will be sufficient, we see no substantial loss occurring if a record is placed in the "wrong" file. Since some practice materials may already be in ERIC, we recommend that they remain there, particularly since purging and updating are not now easily accomplished.

Distribution

In many respects, this fourth function of the Practices File is the most demanding and potentially the easiest to accomplish. The sucess of the File in terms of utilization and impact will be proportional to the sucess realized in establishing relationships for design, development and acquisitons. For, just as the collaborative mechanism facilitates acquisiton of documented programs and practices, so also do these same mechanisms provide a natural system for out-reach. Organizations, agencies and groups contributing to the File will have a substantial investment in promoting its use since it shall become a major dissemination mechanism for those cooperating programs.

Despite these potentially useful mechanisms, we must emphasize the complexity of the distribution process. Since Phase I, we have indicated the need to view the File as only one component in the dissemination/support services structure. The quality of linkage/intermediary structures. the quantity and quality of incentives and the quality of leadership and organizational functions all impact on the ultimate utilization of information resources. At least some of the variation in these components across the pilot test sites was related to the success demonstrated by the respective sites in using the File. We are cautious in our judgments here because of the ever-present intervening variables.

We see the interdependence of the Practices File and the emerging and existing dissemination/delivery system as a very positive state of affairs for, if the File is influenced by other components, it can itself influence their operations. We have indicated previously that the File provides a neutral resource base which many programs can use while maintaining independent operations. Nevertheless, the use of a common data base is an opportune environment in which substantive issues regarding a wide range of dissemination activities may be discussed.

The primary, first-line "clients" of the File, at least in terms of distribution, are the managers and staff of the contributing programs and of information centers and other support service organizations. While it is important to undertake awareness activities to market the File in the practitioner community, we see this as a secondary activity for File management. Instead, we recommend that File managers conduct awareness activities which focus on helping the intermediary organizations spread the work to their own clients thus making the "marketing" of the File a program responsibility focused upon the respective program constituencies.

The following objectives are viewed as essential with respect to the distribution function:

1. To promote the File through awareness activities targeted to program managers and information center and support services organization staff;
2. To design and conduct transformation activities for preparing information products targeted to practitioners in schools and classrooms;
3. To promote the application of information from the File as part of problem-focused school improvement efforts.

Recommended Strategies.

Use the collaborative structure employed to design and develop the File as the major mechanism for distribution. Work with the RDIS component of the R&D Exchange to prepare user products and services targeted to practitioners. Prepare documentation which describes the content of the Practices File and the different types of programs and practices that are contained in it.

We believe there were valid arguments early for NIE regection of the monthly announcement catalogs such as those employed for RIE and CIJE. While the primary reason is the non-archival (highly transient) nature of the information, we are also aware that costs of producing such catalogs are extremely high in comparison to the marginal benefits that may be derived from the limited manual searching that might be done. As an alternative, we proposed announcement vehicles which are targeted to specific topics or issues and those which "transform" the File output into practical products of high utility. To this end, we have discussed with Dr. Linda Reed at the Research and Dissemination Information Services (R&D Exchange, CEMREL) the possibility of joint development of user products which reflect the outcomes of her research on practitioners' preferences in terms of the form of information products. As an additional activity, we propose that the Practices File, in conjunction with RDIS and other programs, design and conduct

workshops for information centers and other support services organizations on transformation of Practices File output into user products.

Summary

This overview of the four major functions of the Practices File has focused on recommended strategies, broad process objectives and a discussion of issues identified during the pilot test. As we indicated previously, we believe that the limitations of the pilot test did not allow for the development of hard data to support many of our recommendations. Indeed, we do not believe that many of them are susceptible to analysis and decisions through the collection and review of data. We also have argued for a "gestalt" perspective, one which views the File within a variety of political, organizational and educational contexts. The following sections build upon this overview and analysis of strategies through the specification of an organizational structure and operational plan for the conduct of Phase III activities, including an expanded field test and a transition period.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR TRANSITION PERIOD

This section of the implementation plan deals with the organizational structure proposed for Phase III and with the operations of that structure in the expanded field test and transition period. Five major objectives are proposed for the Phase III transition:

1. Maintain the simulated Practices File Clearinghouse.
2. Continue development and expansion of the test file.
3. Expand the field test.
4. Continue and expand the evaluation.
5. Provide for a transition to an operational phase.

These objectives are discussed in detail below. Following this delineation of activities, a discussion of staging and phasing considerations is presented, together with a projected time line for the completion of Phase III activities. A brief overview of some issues relating to the organization and operation is also provided.

Objective 1 Maintain Practices File Clearinghouse

Activities proposed for addressing Objective 1 are as follows:

1.1 Establish Practices File Transition Team

Form a team responsible for operating the File during the transition phase according to recommendations approved by NIE. The staff should include a director, a program liaison, a field-test coordinator, an evaluator and information processing staff. (See Appendix B for role descriptions of these team members.)

1.2 Establish Cooperating Program Representative Board

The purposes of the Board will be to advise NIE on the further development of the File and to assist its development through the

identification of resources for inclusion in the File. The committee will be comprised of Transition Team members and persons representing programs making major contributions to the File data base. It shall be the major mechanism for collaborative File development.

1.3 Maintain Project Advisory Committee

The purpose of this committee will remain as in Phase II: Provide advice to the contractor and to NIE on the design of the File. Based on experiences in Phase II, partial membership for the PAG is proposed (See Appendix C).

1.4 Establish Acquisition Relationships

Formal acquisition relationships will be established with all programs (federal and non-federal) expressing an interest in contributing to the File. A partial list of programs indicating interest is contained in the Appendices. Because the size and scope of the File will be expanded during Phase III, it is estimated that from seven to eight thousand practices, covering all content areas, could be acquired for indexing.

Acquisition relationships also will be established to collect less organized and fugitive practice materials through dissemination organizations such as the Regional Exchanges, State Dissemination Programs and intermediate service agencies.

A meeting of all interested program representatives should be the first major activity of this group and can serve as the forum for creating the Board (Activity 1.2).

1.5 Acquire and Select Materials

When organized resource bases of existing programs are submitted, no selection mechanism will be employed other than to assure adequate documentation against the required fields including indication of the level of evaluation.

1.6 Process Practices into File

Where practices are not already abstracted, this will be performed. Where abstracts are provided, these will be edited by Clearinghouse staff. All practices shall be indexed and entered into the File by Clearinghouse staff.

Objective 2 Continue Development and Expansion of the File

Activities proposed for addressing Objective 2 are as follows:

2.1 Prepare File for Searching

Based on findings from Phase III test activities, modifications will be made in the search system and in the record features. The File shall be made ready for searching at the beginning of Phase III and will be expanded on an ongoing basis throughout the period.

2.2 Prepare Awareness Materials

Materials describing the File will be prepared for potential users and for information center personnel. Materials will stress File content, availability and applicability.

2.3 Prepare File Support Materials

In addition to awareness materials, the contractor will prepare a resource document for information center staff. The document will explain the various contents in the File and will provide detailed suggestions for using the File with clients. Such topics as searching techniques, lists of contact persons and explanation of acquisition relationships will be covered.

Objective 3 Expand Field Test

Activities proposed for Objective 3 are as follows:

3.1 Provide File to all Interested Information Centers

Expand the number of sites to whatever information centers and other support services organizations desire to use the File (we recommend about 75 to 100 sites). All sites using the File must agree to participate in training, orientation and evaluation activites.

3.2 Provide Orientation and Training

Based on Phase II experience, orientation and training will be expanded and provided to all sites. Training will include searching using BRS system, searching the Practices File as a special case, and using the File to serve information needs in a school/classroom improvement context.

3.3 Provide Technical Assistance to Sites

A trouble-shooting team will be available to assist sites in both technical and program uses of the File. Such assistance will be conducted primarily through mail and telephone communications by Transition Team members.

3.4 Provide Search Services of Practices File

Within sixty days after the initiation of Phase III, search services of the Practices File will be offered to all eligible sites. Services will be provided as the File scope and size is expanded.

Objective 4 Continue and Expand Evaluation

Activities proposed for Objective 4 are as follows:

4.1 Develop Agreement with Sites

Each site using the Practices File during the field test will agree to participate in the evaluation. The site evaluation agreement will specify the obligations of site managers in data collection and reporting to the contractor.

4.2 Expand Evaluation Design

The existing evaluation design for Phase II included the following:

1. A review of site management operations
2. Immediate feedback from clients
3. Brief case studies
4. Interviews with site managers
5. On-line data collection of user profile data

The design and conduct of the evaluation will be expanded to include assessment of utilization and impact and more intensive case studies of site operations and utilization strategies. (See below for detailed evaluation plan.)

4.3 Collect Evaluation Information

Each participating site will be required to collect information on users and client feedback and utilization. The contractor will also investigate special issues through the collection of data during the field test.

4.4 Prepare Evaluation Reports

The contractor will prepare evaluation reports on all variables and decision situations specified in the approved evaluation design.

Objective 5 Provide for Transition to Operational Phase

Activities proposed for Objective 5 are as follows:

5.1 Establish Phase III Transition Committee

The contractor, in conjunction with NIE, will establish a committee comprised of NIE staff, the ERIC technical contractor and selected ERIC Clearinghouse staff. This committee shall serve as the review and development mechanism for finalizing and implementing transition plans to be accomplished by the transition team.

5.2 Prepare Transition Plan

This plan shall specify the activities to be transferred to ERIC or to other operational units, the responsibilities for executing such transfers, the timelines for transfers and special issues to be addressed during the transition period.

5.3 Implement Transition Plan

Based on the approved transition plan, the contractor will transfer the conduct of specific Practices File operations to designated units or agencies. It is expected that transition activities would commence near the end of the field test and be accomplished in about six months.

5.4 Provide Technical Assistance

During the transition period, the transition team will provide technical assistance to those units or agencies to which File operations are being transferred. Such assistance shall take the form of consultations.

Plan for Evaluating the Field Test and Transition

During the Phase III field test, the evaluation effort begun in the pilot test phase should continue with an expanded focus in keeping with the broader development, implementation, and utilization of the Practices File which has been proposed. This evaluation should seek to answer three critical questions relevant to the expanded field test:

1. Can the File be effectively implemented and integrated into the ongoing information services of a large number of field test sites?
2. Can the File be utilized effectively by the clientele of these sites to meet their diversified needs for information about educational practices?
3. What are the characteristics of both successful and unsuccessful cases of File implementation and utilization?

The specific variables to be addressed within each of these questions, and the evaluation procedures which will be used, are described below under the separate headings of Field Test Site Evaluation, User Evaluation, and Case Studies.

Field Test Site Evaluation

This part of the evaluation will assess two primary aspects of the sites' attempt to integrate the Practices File into their ongoing operations:

1. key benefits perceived, both for the site and its various client populations; and
2. problems and constraints experiences, including problems with the File itself, technical problems involved in its utilization, and problems attributable to specific aspects of the site.

These will be assessed, first, through a questionnaire (Field Test Site Assessment Form) which will be sent to each participating site at three different points during the field test: at the end of the first quarter, at the midpoint of the test, and again during the final month. The instrument will be structured to obtain information within such specific areas as creating awareness of the Practices File among clientele, selecting appropriate client information requests for File searchers, conducting searches, communicating File output to clients and providing assistance in its interpretation and utilization.

In addition, in-depth final assessment telephone interviews will be conducted with a sample of approximately 20 sites at the conclusion of the 12-month field test to further probe issues covered in the questionnaire and to obtain the sites' suggestions for future development, implementation and utilization of the Practices File. The sites to be included in the interviews will be determined on the basis of the questionnaire data obtained during earlier months and will be broadly representative of the types of information centers participating in the field test as well as the range of various "models" of file implementation.

User Evaluation

Through this part of the evaluation, assessments will be made of two variables related to the ultimate users of the Practices File:

1. their initial reactions and evaluation of file search results at the time of receipt; and
2. their utilization of search results during later months.

The first variable will be measured through a modified version of the Search Appraisal Form used during the pilot test phase, focusing essentially on users' evaluation of the apparent relevance, comprehensiveness, newness, and overall adequacy of file search results. Users will be requested to provide these data within two weeks of receipt of file output. A second instrument, the Search Results Utilization Form, will be developed and used to assess the extent and patterns of file output utiilization by a sample of approximately 200 Practices File users, stratified by site where search was conducted, user's position, and purpose motivating the search request. Three separate forms of this instrument will be used to assess utilization 3 months, 6 months and 9 months following receipt of search results. Emphasis will be placed on determining specific steps taken to follow up information, and adoption activities encountered, applicability of follow-up information, and adoption activities undertaken by the user. The overall goal of this part of the evaluation is to begin to determine the actual impact of the File on improving educational practice.

Case Studies

The third part of the Phase III evaluation will involve in-depth case studies, focusing on approximately 10 representative field test sites and their clientele, in order to obtain a comprehensive view of both successful and unsuccessful instances of file implementation and utilization. These studies are a critical aspect of the evaluation. They will allow for direct observation of how the Practices File is actually used in field test sites, as well as face-to-face discussions with persons most involved with its implementation and utilization. Specifically, the case studies will incorporate three components:

1. Observation of File activity at sites, using observational checklists and tally sheets.
2. In-depth, semi-structured interviews with site manager and searchers.
3. In-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected clients for whom Practices File searches have been conducted.

These procedures will be employed during the final quarter of the field test and will involve a period of two days at each of the 10 sites. Their aim will be to determine the essential characteristics of cases in which the File is being effectively utilized as well as those cases in which file activity is either quantitatively or qualitatively ineffective.

The chart on the following two pages summarizes the key aspects of each part of the proposed Phase III Evaluation Plan.

Reporting

Two evaluation reports will be prepared during Phase III; one at the mid-point and the second at the conclusion of the 12-month field test. The Interim Report will focus primarily on data obtained through the first two Site Assessments, as well as the user data obtained up to that point in the field test. The Final Report will include a comprehensive analysis of all site and user data obtained, detailed summaries of the 10 case studies, and an analysis of configurations and typologies of variables related to effective utilization.

PHASE III EVALUATION PLAN SUMMARY

Evaluation Aspect	Specific Target	Time of Data Collection	Method of Data Collection	Instrument	Key Variables Measured
Field Test Site Evaluation	all participating sites	-end of 1st quarter of field test -midpoint -during final month	mailed questionnaire	Site Assessment Form	perceived benefits of file for site and clients; problems and constraints experienced
	representative sample of participating sites (N=20)	at conclusion of field test	telephone interview	Final Site Assessment Interview Guide	perceived benefits and problems; suggestions for future development and use of File
User Evaluation	all file users	within two weeks of receipt of file output	mailed questionnaire	Search Appraisal Form	initial evaluation of file search results vs. relevance, comprehensiveness, novelty, adequacy, etc.
	stratified sample of file users (N=200)	3 months, 6 months, and 9 months following receipt of file output	mailed questionnaire	Search Results Utilization Form	extent and patterns of file output utilization

37

PHASE III EVALUATION PLAN SUMMARY (cont.)

Evaluation Aspect	Specific Target	Time of Data Collection	Method of Data Collection	Instrument	Key Variables Measured
Case Studies	representative sub-sample of participating sites (N=10)	last quarter of field test	observation	checklists and tally sheets	procedures, staffing, personnel practices regarding file; interactions with clients; time spent on file activities; relationship of file activities to other site operations
			personnel interviews:		
			-with site managers	Site Manager Interview Guide	implementation policies re: file; attitudes re: file integration within overall site operations and service priorities; relationships with clients
			-with searchers	Searcher Interview Guide	search strategies utilized; relationships with clients
			-with clients	Client Interview Guide	motivation and expectations re: file use; assessment of role of site in file searches; assessment of site policies re: file

38

Staging and Phasing of the Implementation Plan

The 18-month implementation and transition phase is broken down in three roughly equal periods or stages. These stages are consistent with the recommendations made regarding the phase-out of the transition team and the phase-in of the operational structure to be employed for ongoing maintenance of the File.

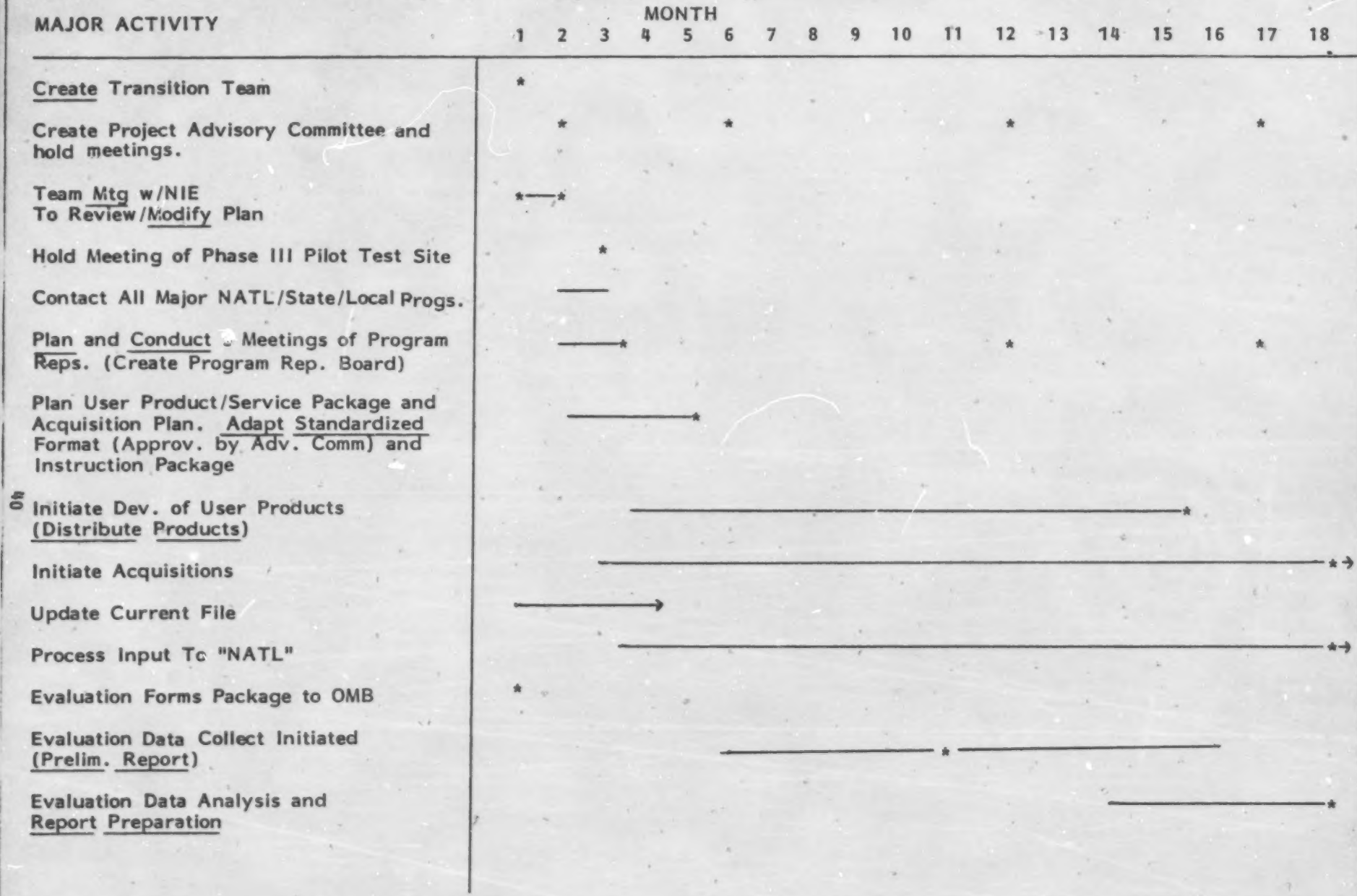
The first stage is devoted to the establishment of the transition team and the initiation of File expansion efforts including development of collaborative efforts with cooperating programs and developing the field test network. The major administrative task during the initial stage is the complete review and analysis of the implications the File implementation has for various organizations such as ERIC.

The second stage marks the initiation of the field test and evaluation data collection. During this time period of approximately six months, the actual plan for administrative transition to the fully operational mode will be finalized.

The final stage is devoted to a full analysis of the field test data to inform administration of the fully operational file. Also, the actual transfer of File management and operations will be executed thus moving those functions from the Transition Team to the permanent operational structures.

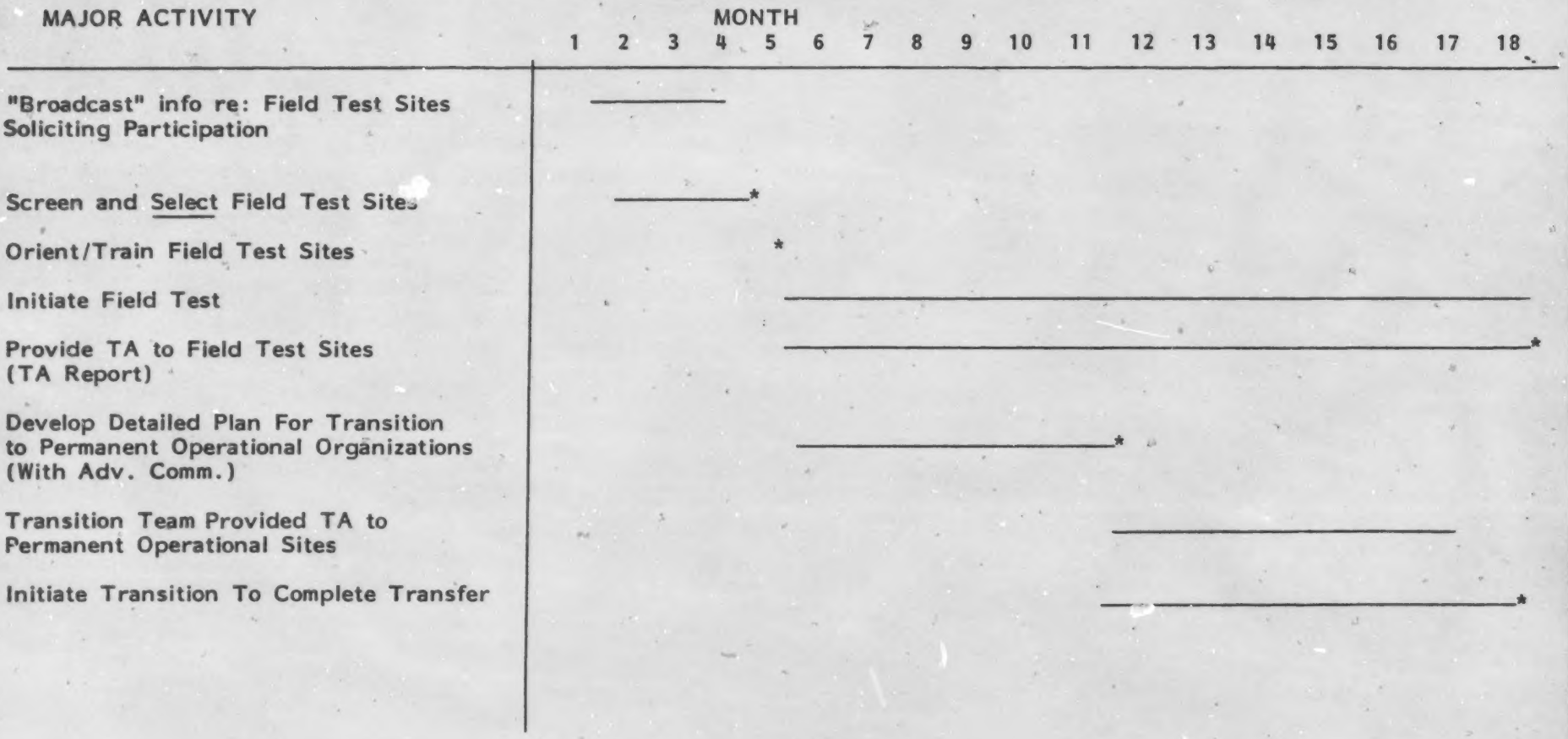
The following pages detail the 18-month field test and transition. The timeline represents a blend of operational activities to capitalize on the current high level of interest, and a deliberate administrative staging of the transition from a developmental to a permanent operational mode.

PHASE III PROJECTED TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES


MAJOR ACTIVITY
MONTH
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
Create Transition Team
Create Project Advisory Committee and hold meetings.
Team Mtg w/NIE To Review/Modify Plan
Hold Meeting of Phase III Pilot Test Site
Contact All Major NATL/State/Local Progs.
Plan and Conduct 3 Meetings of Program Reps. (Create Program Rep. Board)
Plan User Product/Service Package and Acquisition Plan. Adapt Standardized Format (Approv. by Adv. Comm) and Instruction Package
Initiate Dev. of User Products (Distribute Products)
Initiate Acquisitions
Update Current File
Process Input To "NATL"
Evaluation Forms Package to OMB
Evaluation Data Collect Initiated (Prelim. Report)
Evaluation Data Analysis and Report Preparation

*Denotes Deliverable

PHASE III PROJECTED TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES (cont.)


MAJOR ACTIVITY
MONTH
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
"Broadcast" info re: Field Test Sites Soliciting Participation
Screen and Select Field Test Sites
Orient/Train Field Test Sites
Initiate Field Test
Provide TA to Field Test Sites (TA Report)
Develop Detailed Plan For Transition to Permanent Operational Organizations (With Adv. Comm.)
Transition Team Provided TA to Permanent Operational Sites
Initiate Transition To Complete Transfer

*Denotes Deliverable

PHASE III DELIVERABLES

MONTH DUE	EXPLANATION
1	Formal Committment of actual Transition Team Members indicating functional Phase III roles. This team must minimally include a Phase III Project Director, a Field Test Coordinator, a Cooperating Program Liaison and an Evaluation Coordinator with percent of FTE indicated for each.
1	OMB Field Test Site Evaluation Forms Package complete and submitted to OMB.
2	Modified Phase III Plan in accordance with Transition Team/NIE staff meeting held during month 1.
3	Plan for inviting appropriate national/state/local program representatives to a Practices File "implementation meeting" including indication of those to be invited and a full meeting agenda specifying outcomes (i.e., designation of Advisory Committee).
4	Full report of Practices File Implementation Meeting.
4	Field Test Site List • User Product/Service Package • Acquisition Plan • Adapted (if need be) Practices File Data Transfer Form and instruction package for completion All of the above deliverables are to be developed in accordance with direction of the "cooperating program" Advisory Board direction and approved by that committee prior to submission to NIE.
5	Report of Field Test Site Training and Orientation
6	User Products • General File Awareness Material • Field Test Site Access Announcement • Content Announcements (Content Announcement also due in month 15 to reflect expanded File)
11	Detailed operational/organizational plan for permanent File implementation (Must be developed in accordance with Cooperating Program Board direction and submitted with Board approval).

PHASE III DELIVERABLES (cont.)

MONTH DUE	EXPLANATION
11	Interim Field Test Evaluation Report
18	Final Field Test Evaluation Report
18	Field Test Site Technical Assistance Report
18	Report of the Field Test Acquisition arrangements with cooperating programs and an accounting of actual acquisitions by program
18	Report of the Field Test processing operations to include a cost analysis as accomplished in Phase II Product 2.1 (Section 10.0)
18	Field Test File (tape) including approximately 4,000 new Field Test Entries in addition to the Pilot Test version of the File
18	Final report of the transition of the Practices File to permanent operational status involving collaborative relationships with cooperating programs for relevant file design features. This deliverable is to include a description of each file design feature outlining the role agreed to by cooperating programs.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this implementation and management plan is to delineate a process for moving the File from a small-scale developmental effort to a full-scale integrated resource. This phase is regarded as transition because it includes the gradual transfer of the File to organizational structure that will administer it on a permanent basis as well as including a further refinement of the File itself.

In preparing this plan, project staff found that it was necessary to define the problem as larger than the expansion of a File in order to be consistent with the findings of the Design Phase findings which focused on resource coordination. Instead, by defining the problems as one of integrating an expanded File into the existing and evolving nationwide dissemination configuration, staff identified requirements which went beyond the narrower parameters of the File. These requirements were based on the identification of key assumptions and a set of contexts concerning the larger domain of knowledge utilization for practice improvement.

The assumptions which support our analysis and recommendations with respect to the larger domain of knowledge utilization for practice improvement.

- The transition from a developmental project to an operations program should be affected incrementally to allow for collection of additional field test information.
- The Practices File needs ultimately to be integrated with ERIC wherever possible in order to build on this existing capability and thereby hold costs down.
- Given the organizational uncertainties, the determination of "the best way" cannot be determined a priori, thus the need for an organizational framework in which stakeholders participate in decision-making.
- The Practices File needs to be integrated with existing and emerging dissemination activities, particularly those at the federal, national and state levels if it is to provide a support service to those programs.

- The Practices File is not, nor will it be, a static entity; it will change to reflect the needs of practitioners and program managers. For this reason, it is not possible to build in all parts of the system solution a priori.

The Practices File does not exist in a vacuum nor are the central implementation issues technical. Four major contexts have been identified as impinging on the implementation and management of the File while not being related directly to the development itself.

The lack of a federal information policy. As discussed earlier, there is no general consenus on goals and objectives, functions, roles and responsibilities. Standards or criteria for assessing the implementation plan are not completely available outside of the plan itself, although these standards are implied in the discussion of contexts.

The school improvement process. Major program development, staff development and dissemination programs at all levels are using the school improvement process as a central focus of their efforts. The result is that information resource systems are needed to support activities at the school level.

The NIE/Department of Education organizational context. While it is likely that near-term decisions will be made by NIE, it is probable that a larger and more varied configuration of organizations and actors will participate in future decisions.

Proliferation of educational file development efforts. The number of independent efforts at federal, national, regional, state, sub-state and local levels is growing rapidly.

Based on these assumptions and contexts, a rationale for the transition phase was developed:

- A conscious effort should be employed to use the File and its development and implementation as a catalyst and facilitator for increased coordination among federal programs involved in dissemination.
- Expand the size and scope of the File as soon as practical. Expand test through an increase in number of sites. Lengthen the field test period to a minimum of nine months and expand evaluation to focus on verification of pilot test findings and on addressing impact questions.
- Integrate Practices File with ERIC system as much as possible and as soon as possible. Where integration is not possible, use collaborative structure to handle special needs. Document processing and automated file construction should be considered first.
- Employ acquisition and selection criteria based on the principle of widest possible benefit to the practitioner. Delay decisions on such issues as quality control, source documentation and update until completion of the field test.
- While the technical design and maintenance of the data base should be interfaced with the ERIC system under NIE's management, decisions about the programmatic aspects of the File should be managed independently and shared among appropriate federal and state programs.

Based on this rationale, the following major recommendations are proposed for the implementation and management of the expanded File:

1. While the technical design and maintenance of the data base should be interfaced with the ERIC system under NIE's management, decisions about the programmatic aspects of the File should be managed independently and shared among appropriate federal and state programs through the Transition Team and the Cooperating Program Advisory Board.
2. A conscious effort should be employed to use the File and its development and implementation as a catalyst and facilitator for increased coordination among federal programs involved in dissemination.
3. Expand the size and scope of the File as soon as practical. Expand the test through an increase in number of sites. Lengthen the field test period to a minimum of nine months and expand the evaluation to focus on verification of the pilot test findings and on addressing impact questions.
4. Investigate the feasibility of integrating the Practices File with the ERIC system. Where integration is not possible, use a collaborative structure to handle special needs. Document processing should be the first integrated function.
5. Employ acquisition and selection criteria based on the principle of widest possible benefit to the practitioner and the cooperating programs. Delay decisions on such issues as quality control, source documentation and update until completion of the field test.
6. Focus File content on existing organized data bases (both federal and non-federal). Use the File to push for increased documentation, not validation.

7. Facilitate development of technically compatible resource bases at other levels (e.g., state or regional). Develop models and provide technical assistance.

8. Develop a collaborative organization for the overall management of the File.

9. Use acquisition mechanisms for dissemination; develop closer ties with information centers and other resources (e.g., Teacher Centers, ISA's) proximate to practitioners.

Four major functions and five broad objectives are proposed for the implementation phase. The functions are:

Establishing Relationships

Recommended Strategies.

1. In order to create a recognized administrative body for the transition, NIE should form a "transition team" responsible for the conduct of all other recommendations. The nucleus of this team should consist of the key staff involved in Phase I and II.

2. In order to establish relationships with other organizations and agencies engaged in developing program resources and/or files, the Transition Team should form an Advisory Board comprised of representatives of these key entities. The Transition Team should make them aware of its intent to take leadership responsibility for the technical and organizational development of the File and of its intent to develop a collaborative structure for building and funding that development.

Acquisitions

Recommended Strategies.

Focus initial acquisition relationships on those programs (federal and non-federal) having organized identifiable resource bases. Continue to investigate how the File may collect unorganized resources. Employ acquisition and selection criteria based on the principle of widest benefit to practitioners and those who directly serve practitioners' support service needs. Avoid stringent quality-control measures until and unless verification of such measures is accomplished.

Processing

Recommended Strategies.

Assess whether processing activities can be moved into the ERIC clearinghouse system in the transition period. Provide orientation and training to appropriate clearinghouse staff. Enter into Practices File all submissions from organized program files. Where deicsions are made at clearinghouse level, the need for updating, the form and the availability of source documentation should be the major criteria for judging whether the information should be entered into the Practices File or ERIC.

Distribution

Recommended Strategies

Use the collaborative structure employed to design and develop the File as the major mechanism for distribution. Work with the RDIS component of the R&D Exchange to prepare user products and services targeted to practitioners. Prepare documentation which describes the content of the Practices File and the different types of programs and practices that are contained in it.

Five objectives are proposed for the Phase III transition:

1. Maintain Practices File Clearinghouse.
2. Continue the development and expansion of the File.
3. Expand the field test.
4. Continue and expand the evaluation.
5. Provide for the transition to an Operation Phase.

In addition to specific objectives, a more detailed plan for the evaluation of the field test is presented as well as an outline of staging and phasing considerations. A detailed, projected timeline is included to show how the three major phases of the 18-month Phase III transition would operate.

Project staff are confident that the proposed plan is sound and can be accomplished. The following brief scenarios are presented in these concluding remarks to illustrate the continuum of broad decision options available to NIE as a result of the 28-months of design, development and pilot test work completed.

All of the foregoing discussion and the content of the related, but separate, Phase II documentation clearly indicated:

- The success of the pilot test effort.
- The ability of the File to directly support school/classroom improvement efforts.
- The need for a collaborative, cross-program effort to continue expansion of the File.
- The current critical interest and momentum dictating expedient decisions and implementation.

Although this evidence is clearly documented and project staff have attempted to delineate a positive and comprehensive course of action, the ultimate decisions shall rest in large part on the organizational and political implications of the foregoing recommendations.

References

Fullan, Michael and Pomfret, Alan. Research on Curriculum and Instruction Implementation. Review of Educational Research, 1977, 47, 375-397.

Gardner, John W. Excellence, Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too? New York, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1961.

Hall, Gene. "Implications for Planned Dissemination, Implementation and Evaluation Revealed in the SRI/NDN Evaluation and Levels of Use of the Innovation Studies." Toronto: AREA Presentation, 1978.

Mann, Dale. Policy Decision-Making in Education. New York, New York: Teachers College Press, 1975.

Schon, Donald. Beyond the Stable State, New York, New York: Random House 1971.

BRS *Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.*

Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302
(518) 374-5011

APPENDIX A

LETTERS FROM PROGRAM/PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES EXPRESSING INTEREST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FILE AND THE IMPLICATIONS THAT IMPLEMENTATION MIGHT HAVE FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE PROGRAMS

BRS *Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.*

Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302
(518) 374-5011

NOTE

A letter expressing interest in attending a meeting to explore the programmatic implications of fully implementing the Practices File was also received from a representative of the ESEA Title IV-C but was received too late for publication. A copy of this letter is available from BRS.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

December 10, 1979

Mr. Greg Benson
Project Director
Education Service Group
Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Greg:

Thank you for your letter of November 16, 1979. We would indeed be interested in exploring the implications of the practice file pilot for Teacher Center projects. Several are interested in information systems of various kinds for varying purposes, and we are concerned both that new and unrelated systems of limited utility be developed and that existing systems be ignored. Please keep us informed.

Sincerely,

Charles Lovett

Charles Lovett
Project Officer
Teacher Centers Program

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
REGIONAL OFFICE
REGION I
JOHN F. KENNEDY FEDERAL BUILDING,
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02203

OFFICE OF
EDUCATION

December 27, 1979

Mr. Gregory Benson
Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.
Corporation Park, Building 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Greg:

Thank you for sharing your letter with the U. S. Regional Office of Education. The idea of a meeting in the spring to explore the technical and programmatic implications of an expanded practice file have great appeal. This is especially true given our Congressional charge to carry out effective dissemination of educational information; our coordination service provided to key dissemination leaders of New England and especially as partners in a local, state and federal effort to effectively identify and diffuse successful business practices in education.

You are to be complimented for taking the initiative and we in Region I offer our support in any way deemed advisable.

Sincerely yours,

Tom

Thomas J. Burns
Regional Commissioner
for Educational Programs

cc: Richard Lavin
ROEP Cabinet

NYC TEACHER CENTERS CONSORTIUM
260 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010
475-3747

Myrna Cooper, Director

United Federation of Teachers | New York City Board of Education | Institutions of Higher Education

November 26, 1979

NOV 28 REC'D
(14)

Mr. Gregory Benson, Project Director
Education Service Group
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, NY 12302

Dear Mr. Benson:

The New York City Teacher Centers Consortium would be extremely interested in learning more about the implementation plan for the National Education Practices File.

As you know, our project is grappling with the problem of developing a program/practice file for the population we serve. Our 32 school districts, 70,000 pegagogues, 29 colleges and universities and a myriad of arts and cultural centers certainly have the potential for becoming part of a rich instructional resource bank for our schools.

We would be particularly interested in learning how the Practice File could support our present programatic efforts. We would be pleased to participate in any informational meeting you may be planning so that we can become familiar with this national effort.

Sincerely,

Myrna Cooper

MYRNA COOPER
Director

MC:ef

MID-COAST TEACHERS' CENTER

P.O. Box 860
Camden, Maine 04843

Director: Sally Vogel *Tel. (207) 594-5428*

November 19, 1979

Greg Benson
Director
National Exemplary Practices File
RD No. 1
Clearview Terrace
Rensselaer, New York 12144

Dear Greg:

The Mid-Coast Teachers' Center has been one of the pilot sites for the National Exemplary Practices File. Teachers in our area have utilized resources in the file frequently and we have found materials available from the cooperating organizations useful for curriculum development and for classroom instruction. Teachers can often use these materials in their classrooms with little or no modification. We are hopeful that this file will be expanded so that teachers can avoid duplication of effort and may profit by the experience of others who have tried these programs and materials with their students.

We are in touch with other Teachers' Centers throughout the country which are interested in finding ways of sharing the programs and materials developed in their Centers with other Teachers' Centers. Is there a possibility that we might be able to share teacher developed programs and materials through the Practices File after Phase II? A file of "hands-on" teacher tested methods and materials for every subject area is exactly what practicing teachers are looking for as they try to provide for individual differences without selecting things on a hit-or-miss basis.

Sincerely,

Sally Vogel

Sally Vogel

Located: Down East Building, Route 1, Rockport, Maine 04856

FAR WEST LABORATORY
FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

27 November 1979

Dr. Gregory Benson
Education Service Group
Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Greg:

This is in response to your request of 16 November 1979 for an expression of interest by our project in participating in a meeting to explore the technical and programmatic implications of an expanded Practice File. We would be pleased to attend such a meeting if your are able to arrange it in the spring of 1980.

We have, as you will recall, been interested in the potential of the Practice File for serving the dissemination needs of Teacher Corps and other Federal teacher education programs. We would like the opportunity to explore possibilities with you at any time.

We will look forward to hearing more about the meeting from you.

Very truly yours,

Jim Eckenrod

James S. Eckenrod, Director
Teacher Corps Dissemination Project

1855 FOLSOM STREET · SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94103 · (415) 565-3000

OSU The Ohio State University

THE NATIONAL CENTER
FOR RESEARCH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Phone: 614-486-3655
Cable: CTVOCEDOSU/Columbus, Ohio

November 28, 1979

Dr. Charles Mojkowski
Project Consultant
Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, NY 12302

Dear Charles:

I was very glad to receive your November 23 letter. We're happy to know that you've been hearing good things about our work.

I would be very interested in participating with other disseminators in a forum about technical and programmatic implications of an educational practices file. This would be a welcome opportunity for us to learn more about the recently completed pilot test of the File, and to consider how such a file might support our dissemination objectives on behalf of vocational education. Spring 1980 seems to be a convenient time for the meeting, and we would like to confirm it on our calendar as soon as a date is set.

Sincerely,

Norman M. Singer
Program Director
Dissemination and Utilization
for Vocational Education

NMS:bc

NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION
InterAmerica Research Associates, Inc.

December 3, 1979

DEC 6 REC'D (9)

Mr. Greg Benson
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, NY 12302

Dear Greg,

The tentative meeting which is being arranged as part of the implementation plan for the National Education Practice File sounds like a solid idea. I am very interested in the development of this file and how it could benefit the bilingual education community.

When the plans for the meeting are final, please include me as one of the participants.

Sincerely,

Joel Gomez
Director

JG/ml

1500 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 802, Rosslyn, Virginia 22209, (703) 522-0710, 1-(800) 336-4560

National Inservice Network

812-337-2734

Indiana University
2853 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47405

DEC 7 RECD ( )

November 30, 1979

Greg Benson
Education Service Group
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Mr. Benson:

I'm writing you in response to your letter dated November 16 to Dan Cline of my staff regarding a session on technology and programatic implementation of an expanded Practice File. We believe policy implications for our project activities might be in order. I would ask that you allow both Dan and myself to attend this meeting if you have sufficient dollars. We will bring two perspectives to the meeting. If this isn't possible please let me know so that I can make other arrangements to cover expenses. I would also ask that you inform us as soon as possible of the date of this proposed meeting.

I look forward to meeting you in Washington D.C. on December 12 at the Resources Task Force meeting.

Sincerely,

Leonard C. Burrello
Project Director

NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAREER EDUCATION

NCCE

at the University of Montana
P. O. Box 7815
Missoula, Montana 59807
(406) 243-5262/6466

DEC 14 RECD (8)

December 7, 1979

Mr. Greg Benson
Bibliographic Retrieval Services
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Greg:

Thank you for your letter rquesting representatives from other information service programs to attend a forum this spring.

The National Center for Career Education (NCCE) is most anxious to participate in the forum and would welcome any suggestions you might have for NCCE to prepare and/or present at that time. This invitation to attend an NIE sponsored forum represents a "first" in NCCE's continuing efforts to become involved in the array of NIE dissemination efforts in general, and Educational Practices Datafiles in particular. Yes NCCE will be there for sure.

NCCE feels that it has much to contribute to the exploring the technical and programmatic implications of an expanded Practices File of the future. NCCE's years of experience with a nation of users directly involved with NCCE's Databases of career education programs and practices in all subject areas should be shared. Also NCCE has much to learn and we are more than anxious to incorporate user-needed entities into our systems and procedures.

If, per chance, you are struggling with a date, place, or time ... you might consider tagging-on behind the National Educational Computing Conference to be held June 23-25 in Norfolk, Virginia (a mutual interest), or spring fishing in Montana...

Yours Truly,

Ken Murray

Ken Murray

CEMREL, Inc.
An Educational Laboratory

November 13, 1979

Dr. Charles Mojkowski
Education Consulting Services
435 Oaklawn Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920

Dear Charlie:

I enjoyed seeing and talking with you in Milwaukee at the Midwest Regional Dissemination Forum. It's encouraging to find that you are just as excited as I am about what I have learned from practitioners about their uses of and expectations concerning knowledge synthesis products.

As I mentioned in our conversation, information about practitioners' responses to various formats and organizational styles should prove useful to a number of groups, including SEA's, labs and centers, information agencies, ERIC, and professional organizations. I imagine that agencies that fund synthesis activities would also like to know what kinds of formatting and organization appeal to practitioners at various levels.

I was pleased to hear that you are interested in exploring possibilities for the involvement of the Research and Development Interpretation Service in the next phase of the National Educational Practice File. The development of the user products for the project will certainly be a demanding task, and one on which the success of the Practice File may very well hinge. If RDIS can help either in the production of the products or in the training of the production staff, we will be glad to do so.

The possibilities are very appealing. I look forward to talking with you and Greg Benson in more detail if your management plan is approved by NIE.

Cordially,

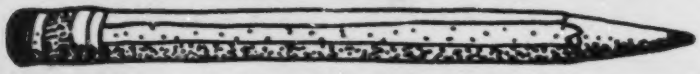
Linda

Linda Reed
Director
Research and Development
Interpretation Service

3120 59th Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63139
Tel: (314) 781 2900

LR/afg

cc: Greg Benson
Harriet Doss Willis



Baltimore Urban Teacher Center

Center Staff
Troy Ryce
Project Manager
Mary Larson
Project Associate

November 27, 1979

NOV 30 RECD (1)

Mr. Greg Benson
Bibliographic Retrieval Service, Inc.
Corporation Park, Building 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Greg,

I would be happy to attend the meeting regarding the implementation plan for the National Education Practices File. I'm certain that this would be a worthwhile experience for me.

I look forward to hearing from you with respect to specific information concerning the meeting.

Sincerely,

Troy J. Ryce

Troy J. Ryce, (M's.)
Project Manager

TJR/ac

2003 Presbury Street Baltimore, Maryland 21217 301/396-0792

703/528-0700

American Association of Educational Service Agencies / AASA / 1801 North Moore St., Arlington, VA. 22209

December 11, 1979 DEC 14 RECD (7)

Mr. Gregory Benson
Biblographic Retrieval Services, Inc.
Corporation Park, Building 702
Scotia, NY 12302

Dear Mr. Benson:

I am pleased to submit a letter of support for the National Practice File Project sponsored by the Merrimack Education Center. The American Association of Educational Service Agencies represents at a national level other agencies which are similar to the Merrimack Center. In some states the organizations are called Board of Cooperative Education Services, County or Intermediate School Districts. This organization has attempted to establish networks among the various states which have these agencies, as well as represent them at the national level in legislation. The project in which Merrimack is participating is very crucial to this national organization.

One of the programs now in process involves establishing a data base so that more information can be gathered on programs which are operating in service agencies. We would be very pleased if this program could serve as a model for the educational service agencies around the United States. We have asked the director, Dick Lavin, to have materials relative to the project available for members in attendance at the 1980 Convention of the American Association of School Administrators in Anaheim, California in February.

We feel this exemplary program will provide necessary services to all of the education service agencies across the country. We are very pleased to recommend that this project be refunded and, hopefully, expanded. If we can be of any further assistance or provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Turner
Executive Director

The NETWORK

290 South Main Street • Andover, MA 01810 • 617-470-1080

4 January 1980

Mr. Charles Mojowski
Project Consultant
National Education Practices File Project
BRS, Inc.
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Charlie:

Thanks for your letter of November 23 inviting my participation in a forum to focus on uses of the National Education Practices File. I'd be glad to attend. As soon as you firm up the date and place, please let me know.

This letter would have reached you sooner had I not been busily finishing up the Final Report and assorted loose ends for the RDN Resource File Project that ended on 30 November. All in all I'm quite pleased with the way the project went. I'll look forward to the opportunity to share our experiences and to learn from yours at your spring meeting. Give my regards to Greg.

Best wishes for a bright and productive new year.

Sincerely,

Susan

Susan Harris
Senior Associate

SH:pah

Model Program Support System • Title One Assistance Project • The Consortium
Massachusetts Diffusion Assistance Project • National Vocational Education Dissemination Study
A Study of Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement • Massachusetts and New England Education Improvement Programs

(The NETWORK is legally constituted as The NETWORK, Inc.)

Minnesota State Department of Education
Capitol Square ☐ 550 Cedar Street ☐ St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Phone: 612 - 296 - 8053

January 7, 1980

Dr. Charles Mojkowski
Education Service Group, Inc.
Corporation Park Bldg. 702
Scotia, NY 12302

Dear Charlie:

Thank you for your follow up letter of the 3rd. I would definitely be interested in attending a meeting on the Practices File and future planning for the effort. Count me in as an interested participant.

Sincerely,

Roy Tally, Assistant Director
State Dissemination Leadership Project

RT:rs

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

January 16, 1980

Mr. Charles Mojkowski
Project Consultant
Education Service Group, Inc.
Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302

Dear Charlie:

My sincere apologies for the delay in getting this letter out. As you know, I've been hospitalized with a bad back. The National Diffusion Network would be most interested, in fact excited, about participating in a meeting to discuss the Practice File, its future, and its relationship to our efforts.

In addition, we would be delighted to assist your preparations in any way possible.

Cordially,

Harty Stowell for

Andrew M. Lebby
Senior Program Officer
Division of Educational
Replication

BRS Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.

Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302
(518) 374-5011

APPENDIX B

ROLE DESCRIPTIONS OF FILE
TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS

TRANSITION TEAM ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Transition Team Director

The Director of the Transition shall have the administrative responsibility for all Phase III activities. These major responsibilities include:

- Providing liaison between NIE and the project staff
- Overseeing the information processing for the expanded File
- Overseeing the expansion of the field test
- Overseeing the expansion of the field test evaluation
- Administering the transition of the File to permanent operational status
- Insuring that all project deliverables and reports are delivered in a timely fashion
- Provide leadership to the Project Advisory Group
- Provide leadership to the Program Advisory Board

Cooperating Program Liaison

The program liaison will act as a primary interface between the project and the Cooperating Program Representative Board. The major responsibilities include:

- Coordinating all meetings of the Board and facilitating the generation of operational recommendations by the board to be implemented by the project
- Coordinating the acquisition relationships with the cooperating programs for expansion of the File
- Coordinating File distribution methods (including user products) as agreed upon by the Board and the project
- Preparation of reports and plans involving the activities and operational policies set by the Board

Field Test Site Coordinator

The role of the Test Site Coordinator during Phase III shall be similar to that of Phase II. The major responsibilities include:

- Developing criteria for selection of field test sites
- Soliciting interest of potential field test sites
- Developing participatory agreements with selected field test sites
- Act as a liaison between the project and the field test network
- Provide technical assistance to the field test network in the areas of awareness, site management of File delivery and searching techniques
- Distribute a periodic newsletter for distribution to all participating sites

Field Test Evaluator

The role of the Evaluator shall be similar to that during Phase III. However, the role is expanded during Phase III and includes the following major activities:

- Develop a complete evaluation design including the development of forms and submission to OMB for approval
- Conduct mailed questionnaire data collection and analysis
- Conduct telephone interview data collection and analysis
- Conduct onsite case study data collection and analysis
- Prepare all Phase III interim and final report evaluation documentation

BRS *Bibliographic Retrieval Services, Inc.*

Corporation Park, Bldg. 702
Scotia, New York 12302
(518) 374-5011

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTED PROJECT ADVISORY
GROUP MEMBERSHIP

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

The continuation of a Project Advisory Group is viewed as vital to the ultimate success of the Phase III Field Test and project staff recommend that the core of this group be made up of individuals that were Project Advisory Group members during Phases I and II. That group was extremely helpful, has a full understanding of the project and how it has evolved, and can provide the element of continuity required for a successful transition of the File to permanent status.

Though there shall also be a Cooperating Program Representative Board to actually manage the direction of the File through a collaborative mechanism, it is felt that the PAG more represents the user community and is needed to provide objective guidance to the overall project.

The total membership of the PAG should be no more than twelve and project staff recommend that the following individuals be included as PAG members during the Phase III Pilot Test and Transition:

Mr. Edward Ball
Harper and Row Publishers
10 East 53rd Street
New York, New York 10022
212-593-7404

Mr. Rodney Barth
Illinois Office of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777
217-782-4433

Dr. Donald Ely
ERIC Clearinghouse for
Information Resources
130 Huntington Hall
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York 13210
315-423-3640

Mr. Thomas Hartsig
Macomb Intermediate School District
44001 Garfield Road
Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48043
313-286-8800

Dr. Kenneth Komoski
Educational Products
Information Exchange
P.O. Box 620
Stony Brook, NY 11790
516-246-8664

Dr. Diane Lassman
The EXCHANGE: MPS/UM
Teacher Center
155 Peik Hall
159 Pillsbury Drive Southeast
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
612-376-5297

Dr. Diane McIntyre
Far West Laboratory for
Educational Research & Development
1855 Folsom Street
San Francisco, California 94103
415-565-3076

Dr. Joel Magisos
Center for Vocational Education
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210
614-486-3655

Mr. Harry Osgood
ACES
800 Dixwell Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06511
203-562-9967

Dr. Frank Thompson
ECOS Training Institute
833 Fox Meadow Road
Yorktown Heights, New York 10598
914-245-4009